Optionality in Assessment: Case Studies

Case Study 5

**Author:** Susan Laura Ramsdale

**Institution:** University of Manchester

**Discipline/Field of Study:** Nursing

**Type of Assessment:** Students choose their own assessment format

**Credits:** 10

**Level:** Level 5

**Unit Type:** Mandatory or core for all students on a particular programme

**Type of Optionality:** Submission format and able to choose own topic, but both must be agreed with supervisor
Assessment Details:
The Negotiated study unit forms part of the pre-registration nursing degree and is part of a suite of 10 credit optional units in year 2. It gives students the opportunity to explore topics that might not be encountered through the degree pathway and to also try novel submission formats.

a. Instructions for completing the assessment

Choosing a topic and format for submission:
- You will work with your supervisor to decide on a topic and the format of your assignment
- This must be agreed and submitted as agreed
- You cannot undertake primary research
- This must be the equivalent of a 2,500 word essay

What to choose:
- Choose a subject that interests you
- It must be health related but can be wider than nursing
- You can look at something outside of your field and you would move into the relevant small group for supervision if necessary

What do we mean by format?
- You can choose how to present your work
- It must be the equivalent effort to a 2,500 word essay

Previous students have done/considered:
- Writing for publication
- Essay
- Presentation
- Poster
- Literature review
- Case study

Criteria for success:

Essential Criteria
- Be supported with relevant references using the approved Harvard format
- Has a reference list of all cited literature (NB. if the reference list is not included the assignment will receive 0% mark)
- Conform to submission instructions as outlined on submission area (if not may receive 0% mark)
- Identification and negotiation and completion of a topic of interest that is of relevance to the overall programme
- Demonstrating of development of the confidence and skills to undertake independent study.

Desirable Criteria
- Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of issues and concepts
- Content is organised, accurate throughout and shows clear evidence of structure and planning.
- Application of theory to practice is evident across all issues.
Arguments are clear, logical and well supported.

Evidence of wide reading which is used to support discussion. Engagement with a range of literature is evident.

b. Marking rubric

1. Transferable skills: a very high standard of written English. There is an outstanding standard of written and oral communication. The use of disciplinary terminology and technique displays the highest level of accuracy and understanding that can be expected for the level.

2. Learning outcomes and assessment criteria: adherence to the criteria for assessment in the question. All learning outcomes and assessment criteria have been achieved to an exemplary standard. All requirements of the assessment have been adhered to.

3. Structure, planning and organisation: a very high standard of presentation; clear, logical and few errors. The organisation, structure and standard of presentation of the work, including referencing, is outstanding throughout.

4. Evidence of reading that is appropriate, relevant, broad and accurately recorded: demonstrates a very high standard of reading. Demonstrates a very high level of understanding and engagement with both sources and the theoretical framework.

5. Use of research to support the discussion: critical evaluation and analysis of relevant research findings. Outstanding evidence of interpretation, critical evaluation and analysis of appropriate research findings. Evidence of interpretation, critical evaluation and analysis of research findings is strong in most areas and may be exemplary in some.

6. Knowledge and understanding of the topic, the main issues and the concepts: an outstanding piece of work which demonstrates outstanding standard of critical analysis that employs ideas, concepts and theory to good effect. There is an excellent display of in-depth understanding, exploration and insight and for the level.

7. Application of theory in practice: a very high standard of understanding of the topic and associated issues / debates. It is clear that the student has a very good understanding of the topic and has applied this knowledge to their analysis. The work is highly structured, insightful, ambitious and perceptive. Levels of rigour, judgement and contextualisation are outstanding. There is clear evidence throughout of the ability to challenge the relationship between arguments and concepts.
### Examples of good practice long form statements

FHEQ 5 Level descriptors: Excellent, detailed, lucid, strong in most areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of good practice long form statements</th>
<th>Examples of words and phrases to be used, or avoided, according to marking range</th>
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<tr>
<td>Your work is excellent. It has clear aims and largely achieves them. It draws upon an appropriately wide range of sources, displays analytical depth with substantial evidence of independent thought, and is written and presented to a very high standard. To improve future marks you should attempt to identify any weaker parts of your argument and / or its presentation, ensure you have addressed opposing viewpoints or evidence decisively, and consider extending the range and use of supporting resources even further.</td>
<td><strong>USE</strong>&lt;br&gt;Excellent&lt;br&gt;Accurate&lt;br&gt;Very good&lt;br&gt;Outstanding&lt;br&gt;Authoritative&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>AVOID</strong>&lt;br&gt;AVOID&lt;br&gt;AVOID&lt;br&gt;AVOID&lt;br&gt;AVOID&lt;br&gt;AVOID</td>
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### Examples of good practice long form statements

FHEQ 5 Level descriptors: Very good, sound, effective, good in most areas and strong in some

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<td>Your work is very good. It addresses the specific topic area very well, with a sound demonstration of knowledge and skills. You provide evidence of appropriate reading and thinking and draw upon the literature coherently to substantiate your claims. Your work is well considered. To improve future marks you should consult a wider range of sources and deepen your analysis.</td>
<td><strong>USE</strong>&lt;br&gt;Very good&lt;br&gt;Sound&lt;br&gt;Effective&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>AVOID</strong>&lt;br&gt;AVOID&lt;br&gt;AVOID&lt;br&gt;AVOID</td>
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1. **Transferable skills:** a very good standard of written English with only minor errors present. There is a very good standard of written and / or oral communication. The use of disciplinary terminology and technique displays very good levels of accuracy and understanding.

2. **Learning outcomes and assessment criteria:** adherence to the criteria for assessment in the question. All learning outcomes and assessment criteria have been achieved to a good standard with some at the higher ranges of this band. Achieved to a very good / excellent standard. All requirements of the assessment have been adhered to.

3. **Structure, planning and organisation:** content well organised and accurate and shows clear evidence of structure and planning. A very good standard of presentation clear, mostly logical and errors are mostly very minor. The organisation, structure and standard of presentation of the work, including referencing where appropriate are good throughout.

4. **Evidence of critical reading:** clear evidence of accurate critical evaluation of reading which is used to support discussion and integration of theories from related disciplines. The student draws on a good range of material but lacks the breadth of engagement with the secondary literature. Very good use of evidence. Topics are mostly addressed but not examined in sufficient detail. Partial awareness of the limits of evidence. A very good standard of referencing, though a few errors or inconsistencies may be present. Good referencing but possibly containing technical errors, some minor, some more serious. The work shows evidence of the use of ideas, concepts, theory and other relevant information and artefacts.

5. **Use of research to support the discussion:** interpretation and application of relevant research findings: very good evidence of interpretation, critical evaluation and analysis of appropriate research findings: evidence of interpretation, critical evaluation and analysis of research findings is good in most areas and strong in some.

6. **Knowledge and understanding of the topic, the main issues and the concepts:** demonstrates knowledge and critical understanding of main issues and concepts with clear evidence of understanding, application and problem solving. The work contains some very good examples of critical analysis but limited in use of ideas, concepts case studies etc. There is a very good display of understanding, insight and / or research.

7. **Application of theory to practice:** link between theory and practice and practice-related issues and / or standards. Application of theory and concepts to practice is evident across all issues with well-developed implications of recommended change (where appropriate). Demonstrates a strong understanding of link between theory and practice and practice-related issues and / or standards.

8. **Reflection on practice which identifies professional development and responsibility:** initiative, self-reflection and decision making. Excellent evidence of ability to reflect on practice, and challenge own assumptions. Excellent evidence of ability to reflect on practice which leads to identified personal development. The work consistently displays excellent levels of decision making and self-reflection.

9. **Arguments:** the understanding of the topic and associated issues / debates. Coherent arguments, demonstrating a high level of understanding of the topic and associated issues / debates. Has addressed most or all aspects of the assignment to a high standard. The work is detailed, compelling, lucid and strong in most areas. Levels of rigour, judgement and insightful contextualisation are excellent. There is clear evidence throughout of the ability to challenge the relationship between arguments and concepts.
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<th>MANCHESTER</th>
<th>The University of Manchester</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Transferable skills: a good / reasonable standard of written English. A number of serious errors are present. The structure is poor and written with poor attention to vocabulary and grammar. There is a basic but poor standard of written and/or oral communication. The use of disciplinary terminology and technique displays limited levels of accuracy and understanding.</td>
<td>Your work is good. You have demonstrated understanding of the relevant principles, theories, evidence and techniques and you have gone some way to meeting your aims through presenting a coherent argument in a competent manner. To improve future marks you should increase your level of critical appraisal and independent enquiry, and seek to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the subject.</td>
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<td>2. Learning outcomes and assessment criteria: adherence to the criteria for assessment in the question. All learning outcomes and assessment criteria have been achieved to a satisfactory standard with some at the higher ranges of this band achieved to a good standard. There may be some minor divergences from the specifications of the assessment task.</td>
<td>Examples of good practice ‘long form’ statements</td>
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<td>3. Structure, planning and organisation: content well organised and accurate and shows evidence of structure and planning. A satisfactory standard achieved, mostly clear, some evidence of logical progression. Some minor inaccuracies. The organisation, structure and standard of presentation of the work are satisfactory, although some instances of poor organisation or limited use of referencing conventions may be present.</td>
<td>Poor</td>
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<td>4. Evidence of reading that is appropriate, relevant, broad and accurately recorded: some evidence of appropriate critical evaluation of reading, which is used to support discussion and integration of theories from related disciplines. Drawn on a satisfactory but relatively limited range of sources. Some assessment of evidence, Topics are mostly addressed but not always examined in sufficient detail. Some examples of treatment of data or literature is basically sound but too narrow in scope and underdeveloped. Understanding of the limits of evidence not fully articulated or understood. Referencing is good on the whole, though some inconsistencies of poor limited citation may be present. Satisfactory references but likely to reveal some weaknesses in comparison and use of referencing conventions. The work shows some but limited examples of the use of ideas, concepts, theory and other relevant information and artifacts.</td>
<td>Examples of good practice ‘long form’ statements</td>
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<td>5. Use of research to support the discussion: interpretation and application of relevant research findings. Good evidence of interpretation, critical evaluation and analysis of research findings is good in some areas but only satisfactory in others.</td>
<td>Poor</td>
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<td>6. Knowledge and understanding of the topic, the main issues and the concepts: demonstrates knowledge and critical understanding of main issues and concepts with some evidence of understanding, application and problem solving. Conscientious work and attention to subject matter and or task set, but balanced towards a descriptive rather than critically analytical argument. There is a good display of in-depth understanding, exploration and insight and/or research.</td>
<td>Poor</td>
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<td>7. Application of theory to practice: link between theory and practice and practice-related issues and/or standards. Application of practice is limited to practice is evident across some issues. Limited discussion of the implications of analysis which results in some recommendations (where appropriate). Demonstrates a good understanding of link between theory and practice and practice-related issues and/or standards.</td>
<td>Poor</td>
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<td>8. Reflection on practice which identifies professional development and responsibility: initiative, self-reflection and decision making. Demonstrates some evidence of ability to reflect on and challenge own assumptions. The work displays some good but limited examples of decision making and self-reflection.</td>
<td>Poor</td>
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<td>9. Arguments: the understanding of the topic and associated issues / debates. Arguments are generally clear, logical and well supported. There is limited evidence of critical evaluation and analysis. Work shows some minor understanding of the topic and relevant knowledge, but its treatment is basic and superficial, and mostly weak. Arguments employed are poorly evidenced and/or contain flaws. The work shows limited evidence of intellectual rigour, judgement and contextualisation.</td>
<td>Poor</td>
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<tr>
<td>FHEQ 5</td>
<td>Level descriptors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level descriptors</td>
<td>Good, fair, clear, competent, reasonable, coherent, good in some areas but only satisfactory in others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of research to support the discussion: interpretation and application of relevant research findings. Good evidence of interpretation, critical evaluation and analysis of research findings is good in some areas but only satisfactory in others.</td>
<td>Poor</td>
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### PHED 5

#### Level descriptors (Degree)

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<th>Insufficient, partial, some awareness, barely satisfactory in a few areas and weak in most others</th>
<th>Examples of good practice &quot;long form&quot; statements</th>
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<td><strong>FAIL 20 - 29%</strong></td>
<td>Your work demonstrates insufficient and partial knowledge and skills in the topic and does not merit a pass mark. Your work does not demonstrate adequately the study skills required at this level. Although you show some awareness of the area, you have missed many important texts and concepts and made major errors. You have made no attempt to critically evaluate evidence and shown no evidence of independent research. Your work has minimal underlying structure and is frequently confused and incoherent. To improve future marks you should improve your awareness of the appropriate principles, theories, evidence and techniques and engage more critically with them. You should present and structure your arguments better and make sure that they are substantiated.</td>
<td><strong>USE</strong></td>
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<td>Inadequate, deficient, some attempt but confused and weak in most areas</td>
<td>Your work is inadequate, deficient, confused and weak in most areas of the topic and does not merit a pass mark. It demonstrates only a basic awareness of the subject matter. Your awareness of principles, theories, evidence and techniques is insufficient, and you show little evidence of critical engagement with the material. You have not paid sufficient attention to the quality, range and appropriateness of sources used, and your arguments are partial and unsubstantiated. To improve future marks you should improve your awareness of the appropriate principles, theories, evidence and techniques and engage more critically with them. You should present and structure your arguments better and make sure that they are substantiated.</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
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1. **Transferable skills:** unsatisfactory standard of written English. Too many serious errors present. Weaknesses undermine clarity of meaning. Test occasionality is incomprehensible. Includes significant flaws in spelling, punctuation and basic sentence/paragraph composition. There is an unsatisfactory standard of written and/or oral communication; there may be significant flaws in spelling, grammar and composition which undermine the clarity of meaning. The use of disciplinary terminology and techniques does not meet required levels of accuracy and understanding.

2. Learning outcomes and assessment criteria: adherence to the criteria for assessment in the question. One or more of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria have not been met. Pays insufficient attention to the assessment criteria and significantly diverges from the specifications of the assessment task.

3. Structure, planning and organisation: no/insufficient structure or evidence of planning/engaged presentation. Poor/unacceptable standard of presentation, lacking sufficient clarity and a sufficiently logical progression with many serious inaccuracies.

4. Evidence of reading that is appropriate, relevant, broad and accurately recorded: evidence of reading is insufficient or inappropriate. Reference list absent/inappropriate. Draws on a very limited range of sources. No real attempt to assess evidence. Examples are occasionally provided, but are poorly chosen and employed. Entirely lacking in sophistication or finesse. Submission reflects a very limited level of engagement in wider reading and a limited confidence/ability in the choice and use of evidence. Citations present but very limited. Referencing is very poor. Bibliography is omitted, partial or poorly structured. Guidance not followed. Many serious errors, revealing very limited awareness of mechanics of scholarship. The work draws on a very limited range of contextual evidence, theory, literature and other artifacts. There is very little evidence of wider reading and very limited evidence of the mechanics of scholarship.

5. Use of research to support the discussion: interpretation and application of relevant research findings. Insufficient evidence of interpretation, critical evaluation and analysis of appropriate research. Insufficient evidence of a critical or analytical engagement in the topic.

6. Knowledge and understanding of the topic, the main issues and the concepts: presents an insufficient level of knowledge and understanding of the topic/concepts/issues. The treatment is mostly descriptive. The work does not meet expected levels of understanding and exploration of major ideas. Whilst the work contains some evidence of critical analysis, it is too limited or partial lacking in depth to justify a pass. It contains some material of merit but shows very limited insight and/or research.

7. Application of theory to practice: link between theory and practice and practice-related issues and/or standards. Does not demonstrate or has insufficient demonstration of how theory is linked to practice. Understanding of link between theory and practice and practice-related issues and/or standards is insufficient for a pass. The work does not make any real attempts to assess or apply the evidence or theory. Examples are occasionally provided but poorly articulated.


9. Arguments: the understanding of the topic and associated issues & debates. Logical arguments are presented. Personal opinions are unsupported. The submission contains some minor material of merit but it is only a partial attempt to address the question that fails to answer the question fully in a robust manner. Mostly unsuccessful attempts to construct arguments. Poor understanding of key issues or concepts. The work does not meet expected levels of understanding and exploration of major ideas. It contains some material of minor merit but shows very limited insight and/or research.
c. Teaching materials:

https://livemanchesterac.sharepoint.com/:p:/s/UOM-SCO-OptionalityinAssessment/Ec4yZkLdItFDkoMH3LtxDx0B_dGodviXp4h7Cq5xu1kFA?e=OlgdMS

d. Other links or pertinent information

The Negotiated Study is an option unit in Year 2 of the BNurs (pre registration nursing degree). It allows the students to explore a subject that is related to nursing but does not have to be nursing per se. The students choose their subject and it is agreed with their field specific supervisor. They then discuss and decide on how
they want to be assessed. Students can choose any format in which to submit their assignment but it must be agreed with the supervisor. To date, students have chosen the following: traditional essay, article for publication, literature review, power point presentation, poster. The only restriction is that they cannot undertake a piece of primary research. Students find the unit challenging but rewarding because of the flexibility given.